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Note verbale dated 15 November 2004 from the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and, with reference to his note verbale dated 13 August 2004, has the honour to convey the first national report of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in accordance with paragraph 4 of the resolution (see annex).

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Annex to the note verbale dated 15 November 2004 from the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee

[Original: Russian]

Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan on steps taken or planned to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)

Given the current international situation, surge in terrorism and threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), Uzbekistan welcomed Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). A vigorous defender of peace and security, Uzbekistan endorsed Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), and, in accordance with that resolution, the Uzbek Government has taken several steps to enhance the system of monitoring and control of the transport of material and equipment which could be used to produce weapons of mass destruction and convey them over significant distances.

Uzbekistan is meeting the obligations it has undertaken under bilateral and multilateral arrangements to prevent the illegal transport of strategically important material and equipment through its territory. All of Uzbekistan's activities are therefore conducted within the framework of international agreements and treaties and in accordance with the military doctrine of Uzbekistan.

Using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, Uzbekistan fully adheres to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which the Government signed in 1993. Uzbekistan became a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for that purpose, and on 8 October 1994 it signed the Agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Agency for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Nuclear plants and nuclear material mining companies undergo regular inspections by both national monitoring and control agencies and IAEA inspectors, and periodic reports are submitted to IAEA on the presence and output of nuclear material and its transport and transfer to other countries. In accordance with the Act on the licensing of specific types of activities and Decision No. 111 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 6 March 2004, legal persons must obtain a licence to engage in activities involving the use of nuclear and radioactive material, and the Act on radiation safety (article 22) requires the State inspection agency Sanoatkontekhnazorat to monitor the safety of radioactive material, which is an additional means of control over the use, safety and transport of nuclear and radioactive material.

To ensure effective control over the transport and use of dangerous goods, in 2002 the Uzbek Government adopted Acts on external economic activities, on the transit of special goods, on export control, on combating terrorism, on defence and on radiation safety, which the Parliament of Uzbekistan subsequently approved, providing for effective monitoring of the transport, use and storage of dangerous goods within the territory of Uzbekistan and of their transit.

Monitoring agencies pay particular attention to the WWR-CM nuclear reactor of the Institute of Nuclear Physics of the Academy of Sciences as that installation is considered to be sensitive and has a significant quantity of nuclear material subject

to the IAEA Safeguards System. Uzbekistan signed the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material in 1998 and the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources in January 2004. In accordance with the Convention and Code, Uzbekistan is required to establish a physical-protection system for preventing illegal access to nuclear facilities and material by unauthorized persons. In that connection, the Government of the United States of America has sponsored a programme to establish a physical-protection system at all facilities which have a significant quantity of nuclear and radioactive material or are of interest to terrorists, and funds were provided to establish the physical protection of the WWR-CM reactor and remove spent nuclear fuel, which had been a cause of great concern.

The establishment of physical protection of medical facilities (oncological centres) using a significant amount of radioactive material is now being completed.

To enhance the system of monitoring and control over the activities of the State in the area of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, Uzbekistan also signed the Protocol Additional to the Nuclear Safeguards Agreement, in which it undertook to provide complementary access for the performance of international inspections at sites of interest to IAEA. In accordance with the obligations it has assumed, Uzbekistan has conducted six additional inspections together with IAEA inspectors at oil, gas and chemical works and facilities of the Institute for Nuclear Physics of the Academy of Sciences. Sensitive companies are included in the protection system by units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and exercises are carried out regularly at those facilities to ensure that troops from the Ministry are prepared for any unforeseen situation.

Specialized services account for and protect weapons and ammunition kept at bases and depots and monitor their use and storage. Steps have been taken to detect any weapons, ammunition, explosive substances and means of sabotage in hand baggage and luggage during border and customs checks of persons, means of transport and cargo. Particular attention is given to smuggled weapons, ammunition and narcotic substances aimed at undermining the Government and sovereignty of Uzbekistan and to the presence in luggage of materials that foment terrorism, violence and racism.

Uzbekistan is in favour of universalizing all the instruments of the United Nations non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It has therefore ratified not only the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material but also a number of other international treaties, agreements and conventions.

Uzbekistan has also signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction was signed by Uzbekistan on 24 November 1995 and ratified by the Oliy Majlis on 26 April 1996. The Convention entered into force on 29 April 1997.

Decision No. 287 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 6 June 1997 established the Commission of the Cabinet of Ministers on Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

Uzbekistan acceded to the Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection on 9 June 1999, and the Convention entered into force for Uzbekistan on 8 August.

The Commission of the Cabinet of Ministers on the Prohibition of Chemical and Biological Weapons is the national agency responsible for implementing the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

In accordance with paragraph 4 (c) of Part VIII of the Verification Annex to the Chemical Weapons Convention, a yearly declaration on scheduled chemicals and on the implementation of the Convention by Uzbekistan is submitted to the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). A similar yearly report is submitted to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs according to the form adopted at the Third Conference of States Parties to the Convention.

In addition, the following laws and regulations concerning chemical weapons and scheduled chemicals have been adopted.

The Criminal Code of Uzbekistan establishes liability:

In part 2 of article 246, for smuggling nuclear, chemical, biological and other types of weapons of mass destruction and material and equipment which could be used in their manufacture. Article 255-1 of the Code also establishes liability for the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, transfer, storage, unlawful possession and other acts in relation to bacteriological, chemical and other types of weapons of mass destruction;

In article 247, for unlawful acquisition of firearms, ammunition, explosive substances or explosive devices;

In article 251, for unlawful acquisition of virulent or poisonous substances;

In article 252, for unlawful acquisition of radioactive materials;

In article 254, for unlawful handling of radioactive materials;

In article 255, for violation of the rules for the operation of nuclear installations.

A national workshop will be held in Tashkent on 4 and 5 November 2005, together with OPCW, to strengthen the administrative and legal aspects of implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Commission of the Cabinet of Ministers on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has organized several events with OPCW focusing on the prohibition of chemical weapons, including:

1. A regional workshop for the national agencies of Central Asian States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention on the practical implementation of the Convention from 10 to 12 September 2003;

2. A training course on developing and strengthening national agencies to suppress chemical weapons and formulating a response system from 27 to 31 October 2003;

3. A planning meeting for Central Asian States within the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention from 21 to 23 January 2004;

4. A regional training course on managing emergency situations within the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention from 21 to 26 June 2004.

In accordance with the obligations assumed under the Chemical Weapons Convention, four additional inspections were conducted together with OPCW inspectors at the following chemical plants:

1. The open joint-stock company Navoiazot in Navoi from 16 to 21 July 2001;

2. The Fergana Chemical Factory for Furan Compounds (FCFFC) on 19 February 2003;

3. The open joint-stock company Electrokimesanoat in Chirchik from 23 to 26 February 2003;

4. The open joint-stock company Navoiazot in Navoi from 4 to 7 May 2004.

OPCW inspectors were fully satisfied with the conduct of the inspections and the results, as recorded in their reports.

For the purpose of implementing Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) the Ministry of Health has verified the biological safety procedures and the physical protection of pathogenic organisms stored at Ministry of Health facilities.

Pathogenic organisms are used for scientific purposes at the Centre for the Prevention of Particularly Dangerous and Quarantinable Infectious Diseases, the Virology Research Institute and the Research Institute of Epidemiology, Microbiology and Infectious Diseases.

These facilities fully meet the standards established for facilities engaged in the study and identification of quarantinable and especially dangerous infectious diseases. All laboratories have special permits to work with pathogenic organisms, which are issued by the safety commission of the Ministry of Health for each individual laboratory based on categories of risk.

The heads of the facilities have established rules governing the procedures for access by workers to the laboratories and have appointed persons responsible for receipt, accounting for, storage and issuance of pathogenic materials.

In accordance with the rules, the facilities' safety commissions test workers quarterly on their knowledge of safety procedures for working with quarantinable and particularly dangerous infectious diseases.

Access to laboratories and stored pathogenic materials is strictly limited and is granted in strict compliance with the rules.

Pathogenic material is stored in accordance with established storage standards.

Work is carried out in laboratories in accordance with the Instructions on anti-epidemic procedures for work with material infected or suspected of being infected with group I and II infectious disease pathogens, approved by the Chief Sanitary Inspector of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 29 October 1992.

Laboratory workers working with pathogenic materials are provided with every means necessary for their personal safety, and stocks of preventive and therapeutic drugs and disinfectants have been established.

Uzbekistan attaches particular importance to the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and resolution 1373 (2001) on counter-terrorism.

Uzbekistan is cooperating with States Members of the United Nations on a bilateral basis. In particular, it is working with the United States of America within the framework of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme and has signed a number of agreements with that country, on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the United States of America and within the framework of the programmes on cooperative threat reduction and non-proliferation of biological weapons of 5 June and 22 October 2001, American specialists from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency of the United States Department of Defense worked on enhancing the level of physical protection and biological safety at the Centre for the Prevention of Particularly Dangerous and Quarantinable Infectious Diseases and the Virology Research Institute.

The Defense Threat Reduction Agency plans to work on enhancing the level of physical protection and biological safety at the Research Institute of Epidemiology, Microbiology and Infectious Diseases in 2005 and is now doing preparatory research work.

Uzbekistan welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and will support every possible effort to establish new forms of dialogue on the relevant issues. Furthermore, it is an active participant in the existing forums on those issues.

Uzbekistan attaches great importance to cooperation at the international level in countering the threat of weapons of mass destruction in order to ensure its national security.

One of the ways in which Uzbekistan cooperates internationally is by exchanging information with services of foreign States; this is done within the framework of established agreements and treaties.

Uzbekistan understands the seriousness and importance of the Security Council resolution and, in order for it to implement the provisions of the resolution, there is an acute need for highly qualified specialists. It therefore wishes to take this opportunity to train its national personnel in accordance with international standards (customs agencies, border troops, national guard, and monitoring and control bodies).

Cooperation has been established with foreign partners. It is based on the exchange of information on unlawful activities of the leaders and active members of armed gangs, joint development of regulations and agreements involving counter-terrorism issues and implementation of coordinated operations to suppress a number of dangerous crimes.

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